



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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SIX DRUG TRAFFICKERS FROM MEXICO SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON

PHOENIX - Six members of a marijuana trafficking conspiracy were sentenced to Federal prison by U.S. District Judge Paul G. Rosenblatt between October 22 and December 2, 2008, for Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Marijuana. Five of the six co-conspirators – Miguel Gonzalez-Caballero, 23; Vicente Juarez-Miranda, 38; Luis Lopez-Sajupe, 20; Enoc Montoya-Vega, 20; and Jorge Portela-Perez, 21 – were each sentenced to 30 months in federal prison. The sixth, Francisco Robles-Lopez, 35, was sentenced to 60 months in federal prison. All of the defendants are Mexican citizens.

The defendants were recruited by drug traffickers in Sonoyta, Mexico, and paid between \$1,000 and \$1,800 to help transport marijuana across the Mexican border, through the desert, to drug traffickers waiting in Arizona. The six defendants, along with three other co-conspirators, crossed the border in the desert near Sonoyta. Five of the six carried 50 pound bundles of marijuana while the sixth, Portela-Perez, carried food and supplies for the others.

After about nine days in the desert, the group ran out of food and water and readily surrendered to Border Patrol officers who had been tracking and searching for the group. Border Patrol officers seized approximately 363 pounds of marijuana. The three other members of the group, including one person who acted as a guide and was in contact via cell-phone with the drug traffickers in Mexico, fled into the desert and were not found.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. States Border Patrol and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The prosecution was handled by James Morse Jr., Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-868-PHX
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